The Web of Life

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PS1123 Copyright No.

Shelf .B5W4

1895

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE WEB OF LIFE .˙. BEING THE SEVENTH VOLUME OF THE LOTUS SERIES .˙. PRINTED BY THE PRESS OF CHARLES WELLS MOULTON IN THE CITY OF BUFFALO.

MDCCCXCV.

THIS BOOK IS ISSUED IN A LIMITED EDITION OF SIX-HUNDRED COPIES OF WHICH THIS IS NO 6

Augusta Cooper Bristol.

THE WEB OF LIFE

BY

AUGUSTA COOPER BRISTOL

18621-Aa 1

BUFFALO

CHARLES WELLS MOULTON

1895

PS1123
.B5W4
1895

COPYRIGHT, 1895,
BY AUGUSTA COOPER BRISTOL.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Web of Life	9
Responsibility	13
Victory	15
The Pyxidanthera	18
"The Old, Old Story."	20
Confidence	21
What the Roses Said	23
Baucis and Philemon	25
The Grave of My Dream	29
From Weakness to Strength	32
A Morning Picture	34
Faithful Beyond Death	38
My Heart's Mistake	41
"The All In All."	46
Somewhere	50
Voices	52
Not For Ourselves	55
The Higher Unity	57
Life's Day	59
The Difference	66
The New Time	69
Dying	70

THE WEB OF LIFE.

THE WEB OF LIFE.

I WAS weary — more than weary, on a sultry summer morning,
As I filled Life's empty shuttle with Duty's iron thread;
"Though the sum of my achievement all the world should hold in scorning,
If the Over-Soul approveth, I am content" I said.

If the over and the under and the inner-Soul approveth,—
The one encircling Unity, the central All in All,
will sing, despite my faintness, for the sake of Him who loveth
The frail things and the tender, the weak things and the small.

The golden thread of human love, full well had it been proven;
I never have forgotten quite the rainbows that it made;
But alas for all the failure of the web when it was woven!
The shame of noting, day by day, the glowing colors fade!

How my spirit flamed within me! In a grand and frantic fashion
I tore the mesh, and trampled on the falsely shining thread;
Till I rose serene and patient from the ashes of my passion,
And flung the heavy shuttle of Reality instead.

I dallied not for Fancy, and I tarried not for Beauty,
And faint as whispering echoes the voice of Pleasure rang;
For me—I only cared to hear the clarion of Duty,
And work my rhythmic treadles to the trumpet song she sang.

On that sultry summer morning something held me in its keeping,
For a stupor came upon me, and I fancy that I slept,
But the web of life went onward in the dreaming and the sleeping,
And my weak hands, at the shuttle there rhythmic movement kept.

And I thought celestial voices murmured down the ether spaces,
And angel wings came noiselessly and stirred the summer air;

And behind a cloud of glory were two loving spirit faces;
And their talk with one another was a music, sweet and rare.

"She endureth and is faithful," (low and tenderly they spake it,)
"She endureth and is patient, and she maketh no complaint;
She knoweth not the tapestry she weaveth; let us take it
And unfold it to her vision, for her spirit groweth faint.

"She asketh not for pity, but her heart delighteth ever
In the kindly deed of mercy, and the loving sacrifice;
Then let us gather up the somber web of her endeavor,
And, in the true celestial light, reveal it to her eyes."

Then soft they floated downward, and they spread before my vision
The web that I had woven, yet had never turned to see;
Oh the harpers and the seraphim, who walk the field elysian,
That moment must have shouted a song of praise for me.

A Universe alone could voice my triumph and my gladness:
For lo! the work my hand had wrought in heaviness and cold,
Was not a somber tracery upon a ground of sadness,
But beds of sweetest bloom, embossed upon a ground of gold.

And there were living roses, and their golden censers swinging,
Were filled with honey-wine, embalming all the summer air;
And birds with burnished plumage were among the blossoms singing,
And butterflies, on wings of golden flame, were rocking there.

Then suddenly I wakened with the rapture and the wonder,
And Life was glory:—I had read the riddle of its task;
For the gold of Love Eternal is around, above, and under,
And who or what is Duty but Love's angel in a mask.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THINK purely, and thy thought shall aid the rose
To hold her sweetened breath, shall guaranty
The lily's snow, shall filter rain and dew
To clearer whiteness, and shall well insure
The diamond's light, and luster of the pearl.

Deal justly in thy every word and act,
And this—thy dealing—shall eliminate,
Slowly but sure, from out the universe,
The serpent's venom, and the insect's sting,
The earthquake's mumbling threat, the direful sweep
Of the tornado's wing, and all the dread
Perturbance of the star-feet overhead,
Slow deviant from their orbed rectitude.

Live nobly, and the haughty mountain peaks
Shall yield acknowledgement, shall slow relax
Their ancient caste, and lower their proud heads,
In wider reachings stretch their granite arms,
And fraternise in broader unities;
The valleys shall arise to meet the hills,
Exultant and exalted, with no place

For echo's mockery to testify
Of barrier and division. Then take heed
O man and woman, to retain and guard
The sovereign laws of thine integrity,
Drawing the cosmic forces in the train
Of thy white royalty, and shaping thus
Thine own perfection, mould the destiny
And genius of the universe.

VICTORY.

THERE'S not a law, there's not an art
In all the universe complete,
With ultimates that bring defeat
And failure to a loving heart.

Once, when a summer day was born,
I stood before the window pane,
And watched, across a daisied plain,
The grand maternity of Morn.

The sweetest plaint of early song!
The freshest birth of crimson bloom!
Yet, through the brightness stole a gloom,
For I was cognizant of wrong.

I heard the play of forest springs,
I saw the lakelets azure roll
Sweep landward—and my woman-soul
Grew conscious of her folded wings.

And while the earth was glad and free,
And glorious with bloom and song,
My heart was wild with hunger strong
For Nature's sweet divinity.

"Oh not for woman," I began,
"Does Morning lift her golden shield
And smile across the daisied field,
For Nature's brightness is for man.

"He walks with careless ease her sod,
Or day by day, with patient smite,
He bends her strength to human might,
And rules her forces like a god.

"Till, in his spirit stature brave,
He claims a universal scope;
But woman buries every hope,
And walks for life around a grave."

Then, darkly, where the mulberries part,
A slowly moving shadow fell,
Of him who loves me wise and well,
And holds me in his honest heart.

And looking in his earnest eyes,
Straightway my soul forgot to moan;
My higher nature took the throne,
And claimed the crown of sacrifice.

And said, in self-forgetful plea,
"I'll make the narrow place that's given
The very vestibule of heaven,
Because of him who loveth me."

And then, (Oh wondrous to rehearse!)
The humble walls began to rise,
And towering upward to the skies,
They widened to the universe.

And Nature's wealth came in to me;
The beautiful in sight and sound
Flowed my exalted being round,
As trophies of a victory.

Oh grand achievement over fate!
O woman soul, least understood,
Thou holdest all of human good,
In thy affection's ultimate.

For wheresoe'er the path may be,
However narrow, low, or small,
Love's patient work will conquer all,
And carve the steps of victory.

THE PYXIDANTHERA.

SWEET child of April, I have found thy place
Of deep retirement. Where the low swamp ferns
Curl upward from their sheathes, and lichens creep
Upon the fallen branch, and mosses dark
Deepen and brighten, where the ardent sun
Doth enter with restrained and chastened beam,
And the light cadence of the blue-birds song
Doth falter in the cedar,—there the Spring,
In gratitude hath wrought the sweet surprise
And marvel of thy unobtrusive bloom.

Most perfect symbol of my purest thought,—
A thought so close and warm within my heart
No words can shape its secret, and no prayer
Can breathe its sacredness—be thou my type,
And breathe to one who wanders here at dawn,
The deep devotion, which transcending speech,
Lights all the folded silence of my heart
As thy sweet beauty doth the shadow here.

So let thy clusters brighten, star on star
Of pink and white about his lingering feet,

Till, dreaming and enchanted, there shall pass
Into his life the story that my soul
Hath given thee. So shall his will be stirred
To purest purpose and divinest deed,
And every hour be touched with grace and light.

"THE OLD, OLD STORY."

LOVE—a wakened bird is singing,
Singing in the early dawn;
Singing that the day is coming,
Singing that the night is gone;
And my heart sends back responses
To the bird upon the lawn.

Love—the while I lie and listen,
Am I right or am I wrong,
That two melodies seem ringing
Like a song within a song?—
One informing all the other
With its meanings deep and strong.

Love—no bird in wood or meadow
Ever sang like this before;
Am I foolish, am I sinful,
That I listen and adore?
That my life's awakened music
Moves responsive, more and more?

CONFIDENCE.

MINE, as the blossom is mine, which opes
In wonderful bloom by the great highway,
Or buds and blushes on orient slopes
Where honey-gatherers hum all day;
Love's free miracle opens there,
Born of the sun and the summer air.

Though others its beauty and bloom invade,
It can not disturb my strength and calm;
Though they lie all day in its low sweet shade,
And press its cheek of odorous balm,
I am not robbed of a single part,
For the blossom is mine to its golden heart.

Mine, as the mountain bird is mine,
When it lifts its wing for an onward flight,
And over the valley's emerald line
It bears away to a craggy height,
Because I love it, I can not bear
To fetter the strength that cleaves the air.

A bird with an eye to meet the sun,
A bird with pinions that sweep the skies,
Should it fold its wings until day is done,
To perch by me,—I should lose my prize:

Though it soar all day in the clear sunshine,
I fear no loss, for the bird is mine.

Mine, as the billow is mine, that leaps
To furrow the beach of shining sand,
Or with kissing blue lips softly creeps
To the silver feet of the waiting strand,
Or flings its spray to the rocks above,
Strong and true as the heart of love.

It will swing across the wonderful sea,
It will break in pearls at another's feet,
But I know it will surely come back to me,
With the ocean-soul in its passionate beat,
And when it comes, there will not be missed
A drop of its liquid amethyst.

Mine, as the rapture of Heaven is mine,
Because of the generous over-flow,
Which runneth forever, without decline,
From the heart of God to the world below,
And the Over-Life can never be less
For its all embracing tenderness.

As human thought, though narrow and small,
Is drawn at last to the large and free,
As the beauty and strength that ennobles all
Can never be less, but more to me,
As the soul is heir to a joy divine,
So beloved, thy life is mine.

WHAT THE ROSES SAID.

THIS is what the roses said—
One transcendent summer morning,
When the light clouds overhead,
Heedless of my mortal scorning,
Drank the rays of golden red:
When the wild birds solemn trill
Where the river runneth still,
Filled me with a hungry dread;
When my life no truth could render
For the world's mistaken splendor;
When I thought my heart was dead,
This is what the roses said.

"Crimson leaf and pollen gold
Born of darkness and the mold!
Every perfect leaf and fruitage
Rises from a grave-like rootage,
And the strong wild winds that rock us,
And the tempest storms that shock us,
And the snows upon the lea,
All are certain guaranty
Of perfection yet to be:

Of a beauty more complete
For the shadow at its feet:
Greener strength and fairer bloom,
Sweeter breathings of perfume,
Deep hearts filled with richer balm,
May-days more divinely calm,
Fairer reachings into light,
Firmer growth, and nobler height.
Light and peace, from shade and strife,
Is the paradox of life,
For one sweet, Eternal Will,
In the darkness worketh still."

This is what the roses said,
Shaming all my foolish scorning,
That transcendent summer morning
When I thought my heart was dead.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON.

TWO gods, upon the Phrygian hill,
Walked in the ancient summer time,
In humble garb and mien, they hid
Their majesty sublime.

The awful music of their lips,
They set to mortal thought and speech:
Full fain they laid their honors by,
The human heart to reach.

The glory of their kingly brows
They shaded well from mortal ken,
As weary, hungry travelers,
They sought the homes of men,

In vain, with meek appeal, the gods
Essayed the doors of wealth and pride;
Till, pausing where Philemon sat,
With Baucis at his side,

Their mild request for rest and food,
No more with rude disdain was heard;
The agéd couple greet their guests
With kind, and cordial word.

They question not their mean attire,
  They ask not of their name or race;
They only read their human need
  In gesture and in face.

No longer may they fainting wait
  For charity's responsive tone:
The cottage portal backward swings,
  The gods have found their own.

Low bending from their regal height,
  They enter at the humble door;
They sit and watch the agéd twain
  Bring forth their frugal store.

With tender earnest eyes, they note
  How eagerly the trembling dame
Prepares the simple dish of food,
  And fans the scanty flame.

How, for each weary guest, she brings
  A cushion, long preserved with care,
And places by the earthen plate
  A desert, fresh and rare;—

Minerva's olives, apples too,
  Wild honey and some vintage wine,
And then with hearty, simple grace,
  She beckons them to dine.

But ever as the wine is poured,
The wondering host and hostess note
The beverage renews itself
Within the pitcher's throat!

Then faint with shame they falter down;
They kneel in terror and surprise;
The gods' celestial royalty
They dimly recognize.

And tremblingly, they pray their guests
To pardon entertainment rude,
The meager hut, the scanty fare,
The coarse and simple food.

But lo! the while they kneeling pray,
The cottage loft begins to rise,
The thatch upon the broadening roof
Lifts, golden, to the skies,

The posts to fluted columns turn,
The floors of marble stretch away,
The narrow doors, ornate with gold,
Let in the regal day.

And they who cordial welcome gave,
Where others yielded but disdain,—
Who dared the world-rejected ones
To serve, and entertain,—

About their wrinkled brows there fell
A glory, fairer than the sun;
The temple's consecrated priest,
And saintly guardian!

A woman's song is frail to bear
The burthen of her deepest thought.
I may not hope in simple rhyme
To speak the word I ought.

But this I know;—that Life might be
As grand a Drama, and sublime
As ever gods or heroes wrought
In all the olden time.

O men of royal strength and will!
O loving woman-heart; be wise
And fearless, when some truth appears
In unattractive guise,

And begs an honest hearing. Smile
A welcome on the poor unknown,
That Life may broaden into light!
The gods will know their own.

THE GRAVE OF MY DREAM.

I BURIED my beautiful dream—
  The one true birth of my heart—
For I said, "Such luminous gleam
And transfiguration, doth seem
Too bright for Life's purpose and part.
So this birth of my heart
  Is a transcendent lie!—
A freak of soul-art,
  And must die."

Then I trampled it down
  With the feet of my passionate will;
  Till it lay so passive and still,
Wearing neither a smile nor a frown,
  That I said "It is fit for the grave."
So I buried it straight
Under purposes great,
  And sowed there the seeds
  Of victorious deeds,
And heaped high upon it
  The conquests of years,
  But gave it no tears.

To-day I was weary of strength,
Was weary of Victory even;—
The sweet and miraculous heaven
Had won me to quiet at length,
And I said, "I will pause from the strife,
It is well in this orient gleam,
In the lull of a turbulent life,
To sit by the grave of my dream."

Then backward I turned. And behold
A rainbow that melted to gold
Hung o'er! And in place of a tomb,
A garden of wonderful bloom!
Such bloom!
Oh the seeds must have dropt
From white plumes overhead,
White pinions in pity out-spread,
White wings brooding soft from above,
Drawn downward in love.

Then the ear of my spirit was open,
And lo! many flowers had a tongue,
And softly and sweetly was sung
Their chant, while the lily-bells swinging,
Kept time with a chime
To the rythmical singing.

Such music!
A whisper and tremblement rare
Of sound, in each odorous cup,

That climbing the wavering air,
  Full grandly went up,
Like an eagle, majestic and strong;
  While the dawn and the lark were enfolding
The soul of the song.

Such music!
Clearer and sweeter it rose and it rose,
  Till the sky that was peaceful and mild
  As the eye of an innocent child,
Was filled with the sweetness and strength,
  And over and under the sun,
  The music was one:
Up to the heavens and into the heavens,
  Full bravely and strong,
Till the song from the grave of my dream,
  Was one with the seraphim's song.

FROM WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH.

IT is the method of the skies—
When we are in the lowest place—
To set some star before our eyes,
To lure us on to perfect grace.

Some star of promise we can reach
With our weak vision; some reward;
A human heart,—a human speech—
That leads us onward to the Lord.

Till clean in motive, strong in sight,
We face that dread Beneficence
That bids us choose eternal right
Without the cherished recompense;—

Without the human love and light
That beckoned forward to the good;
Through lone pursuit, and single sight,
To learn the strength of solitude.

And he has touched Stylites' hand,
Who, earth-deceived, and love-betrayed,

On his lone height can bravely stand,
And hold his purpose undismayed.

Choosing the agony that's born
When love and duty disagree,
Sooner than face his soul's self-scorn,
And his own heart's disloyalty.

A MORNING PICTURE.

MY path, that runneth low and small,
With vexing care and petty strife
Is narrowed; yet some pictures fall
Into my life,

So heavenly rich, so perfect fair,
I know no more my poor estate,
But walk the hills of upper air
With all the great.

Upon the breezy porch I stayed
To look and listen, yester-morn;
The southern breezes softly played,
Among the corn.

And all the glossy woodland shook
As with a tremble of delight,
And lilies bowed above the brook
Their faces white.

And white the wingèd cloud above,
And white the clover field below,
And wondrous twitterings of love
From throats of snow.

A web of beaded silver hung
  Upon the wild fern's tiny plumes,
And burnished wings flashed in among
    The fuchsia blooms.

And every sound of earth or air,
  Lapsed into sweetness soft and clear;—
A subtle blending, rich and rare,
    That charmed the ear.

How lightly pulsed my very blood!
  My being bathed in Beauty's sea!
The tide was up, and all the flood
    Surged over me!

And in my spirit's ecstasy,
  The barriers of sense and sin
Seemed overborne—so heavenly high
    The tide rushed in!

"Oh would it might for once he found!"—
  (My heart in whisperings began,)
"This perfectness of sight and sound
    Sublimed in man."

When suddenly I turned to look;
  For lo! the Over-Soul had heard
My inward murmuring, and took
    Me at my word.

And there, before the oaken gate,
Upon his proud impatient steed
He sat—the man of purpose great
And daring deed:

The man of all that troublous time*
Who measured, with his falcon eye,
The stature, and the needs sublime
Of Liberty.

The wind's caressing fingers caught
The tossing plumage of his hair;
How heavenly rich the picture wrought!
How perfect fair!

And passing o'er my weak surprise,
And bending with a knightly grace,
He dropt the starlight of his eyes
Into my face.

And while I faintly faltered down,
He gently soothed my foolish fear,
And smiling on my rustic gown,
Spake tender cheer.

Oh very softly flowed the tones
Of melted music from his lips,
As sweet as when through mossy stones
A brooklet slips.

*1866

Yet, like an echo from a star,
A grandeur deified the strain,
Like thunder, blending faint and far
With dropping rain.

And graciously, and gently still,
He took my trembling fingers then,
He—the invincible of will,
The man of men,

Who dared in every hour to throw
Full challenge in Oppression's face,
That our America might grow
To whiter grace.

Was not my poor life glorified?
For I had touched as brave a hand
As ever smote tyrannic pride
On sea or land.

And all so briefly as it passed—
The morning and the meeting—yet
A halo in my life is cast,
A picture set,

And nevermore my heart will pray,
"Oh would it might for once be fouud;"
But joyfully to Nature say,
"Thy work is crowned."

FAITHFUL BEYOND DEATH.

O BEAUTIFUL sun, sinking down in the west,
Shining low on the sycamore tree,
Draw all the dark mountains up over thy breast,
That my angel may come unto me,
. Leave open a fold
Of the crimson and gold,
That my angel may come unto me.

And Night, blessed Night! with the God-written brow,
Spread softly thy Ethiope wing:
O dark brooding mother, thou knowest it—thou—
What the love of an angel can bring
To a tired human soul,
To a famishing soul,
What the love of an angel can bring.

So light up the shadowy steeps of the skies;
And the arches all fathomless, mark
With stars, that shall watch with their tremulous eyes
For the angel that comes with the dark;—
With throbbings of light
Watch the magical flight
Of the angel that comes with the dark.

And wring the red life of thy poppies, O Sleep,
On my lids in a lethean stream,
Till a miracle comes to my soul, and I weep
With the ecstasy born of a dream;
Till the desolate tomb
Of my heart is a-bloom
With the rapture and warmth of a dream.

He comes in my vision! The pearl tinted light
Of a glory drops over my heart!
Not Earth with its blackness, nor Heaven with its white,
Can hold us or keep us apart;—
The height, the abyss,
Between that world and this
Can not hold us or keep us apart.

And there is a courtesy, soft'ning his love,
That he learned of the seraphs, I know;
For he leaveth his dread angel beauty above
When he stoopeth to me here below,
And human the face
That cometh to grace
And hallow my vision below.

Yet I fear, by the angelhood left in his eyes,
That erringly mortal I seem;
But I rest in the gaze that is tender and wise,
For soul knoweth soul in my dream,

And our lips are not stirred
By the sound of a word,
For soul readeth soul in my dream.

And the clear, mellow depths of his eyes ever show,
In their look of immeasureable love,
That much that is counted as frailty below,
Will blossom to virtue above,—
That our rootage in pain
Brings the fruitage of pain
To sweetness and beauty, above.

And though the red light of the morning will come
Bringing back the old burden and strife,
And my spirit will struggle, though stricken and dumb,
With the terrible meanings of life,—
Though my soul groweth gray
All the hours of the day
With the terrible lessons of life,—

Yet Night—brooding mother—will freshen my heart,
However so withered it seem,
Till it pulses with Spring, and the green buddings start
With a love that is warm in my dream:
And the logic of Day
Can not turn me away
From trusting the truth of my dream.

MY HEART'S MISTAKE.

I BRAVELY thought to prove within myself,
Love was the servant, not the vital law
Of my life's purpose;—the sweet incident,
That the wide sweeping current of my will
Must sometimes overbear, and hold submerged
'Neath the full freighted tumult of my thought.
As tendril life below the sea-wave's strength.
So did my heart soliloquize in song,
And under monotones of Saxon strength
Hold down its Attic fervor.

"A glory crowns my life" I said,
"A starry charm in two dark eyes
That opened under Orient skies,
And brightens all the path I tread.

"But should their brightness turn aside,
A glory still is left to me,
For opal lights are on the sea,
And stars are out at eventide.

"And in the golden clasp of Morn,
The Day awakens evermore,
And if I wait at Nature's door—
Dark eyes!—I shall not be forlorn."

"There is a voice" (my heart sang on)
"That gathers into limpid speech
The tidal music of the beach,
And faint bird-hintings of the Dawn.

"While through its silver ebb and flow,
Its sweetly modulated round
Of love—there seems to come and go,
A muffled majesty of sound,

"As if a god's heroic will
Lived latent in that sweet refrain:
Yet—should I hear thee not again,
Rare voice!—there will be music still.

"For gaily, from the oaken spray,
The wild bird carols to the Morn,
And through the flags of rustling corn
The happy summer breezes play.

"While slowly, o'er the meadow lea,
And faintly from a far off shore,
The ocean-breath brings evermore
The Titan murmur of the sea.

"Thus Nature, through all stress and strife,
Doth yield her diapason clear
And generous to the Poet's ear,
Her sweetness to the Poet's life."

And thus assured my heart did fold
  Itself to silence and to rest,
  As bird-wings settle in the nest,
When all the sunset fades in gold.

Though Love was blind that summer day,
  It lent all genius to my ear;
  For I—with steady pulse—could hear
A rapid step, a mile away;

Through distant murmur, noise, and talk,
  O'er all the bustle of the street,
  One step, amid the thousand feet,
Struck music from the gravel walk.

And up the arcade, long and wide,
  I heard it coming; past the lines
  Of heavy grape-empurpled vines,
Until it halted at my side.

And looking up—a darkness fell
  Athwart my glory of an hour,
  That fragile web of fancied power,
My simple heart had woven well.

For sudden, from the crimson pride
  Of darkly shadowed lips, there came
  Swift words that wrapt my heart in flame;—
"My love for thee is crucified."

Oh fateful and exultant eyes,
In whose star-depths, I sought to trace
Some mild misgiving, to efface
The lightning stroke of my surprise!

But in their glory, I descried
No shadow of a hidden pain,
While low the proud lips spake again,
"My love for thee is crucified."

What darkness slipt athwart the gold
Of setting day, and fixed the bars
Of sunset, and the early stars
In shadows dense and manifold!

How strangely on the opal wave
Fell the swift darkness of his speech,
Changing the silver sanded beach
To the grim aspect of a grave.

With downward sweep, and open throat,
The night-hawk scattered in the grass
Harsh dissonance, that seemed to pass
Into the cricket's chirping note.

The insect chorus, from the ground,
Vibrated with discordant jar,
While slowly, from the twilight star
There came a wave of troubled sound,

That rolled upon the dark sea-tide,
  Till every murmur of the main
  Surged inward, with the stern refrain,
"My love for thee is crucified."

I questioned not my startled heart:
  While throught the gloom, my spirit wrough
  A silver channel for her thought,
And silent—held herself apart.

Now, on a dim Plutonic throne
  That Fate created in an hour,
  Divested of all fancied power,
My soul—still regal—waits alone.

Alone—an unrelated thing—
  Her clear thought burning on the dark,
  And glowing like a deathless spark,
Blown from Love's fast retreating wing.

Would he reverse his sudden flight—
  Love—the sweet arbiter of all,—
  My heart, however low his call,
Would rise again in song and light,

And follow where no foot hath trod,
  Beyond the rosy edge of day,
  With all things chanting on its way,
"As God is Love, so Love is God."

"THE ALL IN ALL."

WITHIN our lives of conscious care,
There lies another, fair and sweet;
All gracious sanctities are there,
And trust, and consecration mete;
A heaven that lieth not apart,
A spirit world within the heart.

And yet we grope with veiléd eyes
For that which lieth near at hand;
Or lift our prayers, with piteous cries,
Through darkness, to an unknown land,
While close beside us runs the way
That broadens to divinest day.

I looked upon the summer world,
I heard the gladness of her rills,
I saw her sunset banners furled
Upon the shoulders of the hills,
And looking—in my conscious heart
I said, "God dwelleth not apart.

"If, in the ancient days, His feet
Pressed fragrance from a garden walk,

And our frail mother heard His sweet
And blessed ministry of talk,
If she e'er saw His face divine,
I hold the privilege as mine."

"And yet, my eyes are shadowed quite;
So darkened, that I can not see
To read the wondrous law aright
That draws Him to Humanity.
If I can make an Eden place,
Perchance He will reveal His face."

A place of blossoms, perfect fair,
With emerald arches reaching wide;
No common bloom shall open there,
But heavenly beauty shall abide.
He will return to warn and bless,
Drawn by the law of perfectness.

And then, from morn till eve, I sought
For shrub and blossom, rich and rare;
From morn till eve, I patient wrought,
To make my garden faultless fair:
The common flower I did uproot,
And crushed it with a careless foot.

And soon, it grew a lovely place
Of strange and supreme loveliness,
Where fringe trees, with a mystic grace,
Shook in their airy vapor dress,

And the magnolia's waxen bloom,
Through glossy thickets, breathed perfume.

And near the fountain's circling line,
  The rich rose spread her leaves apart,
And dropt her bosom's amber wine
  Into the lily's open heart;
And the azalea's pink and snow
Gave the green light a sunset glow.

Yet all in vain the thicket's shade,
  The fount, and groves of blooming flame,
For He whose presence I essayed
  With yearnings deep—He never came.
In vain I walked that perfect spot,
For if He came, I knew it not.

Then, in a frantic ecstasy
  That would not be o'er-borne, I cried,
"I can not win the heavens to me,
  Though all perfection here abide!
And since I can not reach so high,
I will my own heart satisfy.

"The little field flowers shall find grace
  Within my sight; I will not pass
The meadow blossom, but give place
  To common blooms of common grass.
I can not draw the Lord above,
I'll make a place for human love."

And in the gladness of the thought,
I sought the azure violet,
And buttercups and daisies brought,
And in the garden border set
The crowfoot, and the gentian too,
And forest harebells softly blue.

When lo! A sudden glory fell
About me, touching all with grace:
For Love—with magic charm and spell,
Had found me working at my place,
And dropt into my heart the key
That ope'd the higher life to me.

And from my vision fled away
The dark'ning shadows, and I saw
The rose tree, and the thistle spray,
Evolving by divinest law;
Divinest life and essence ran
From atom-dust to conscious Man.

One law of life was everywhere,
From starry sphere to blossom seed;
It moved the sea, it filled the air
With vital breath, and I could read
Eternal Scripture on the stone,
And I no longer walked alone.

SOMEWHERE.

SOMEWHERE, await the treasures we have strewn,
Which reckless hands and feet have rudely shattered;
And tenderest love shall gather as its own
The wealth thus scattered.

Somewhere, the tears of broken hearted trust,
Of patient sacrifice, and self-submission,
Shall form the rainbow promise of a just,
And full fruition.

Somewhere, the narrow stepping stones we tread,
The steep and terrible ascent of Duty,
Shall change to velvet terraces, o'er-spread
With emerald beauty.

Somewhere, our human effort of to-day,
The faltering outcome of a pure intention,
Eternity shall hold as brave assay,
And true ascension.

O Universal Soul! The finite range
Of earth and time may dwarf our high endeavor,
Yet Life is victory, through the evolving change
Of Thy forever.

VOICES.

HEIR of an infinite privilege, with earnest zeal,
I sought
To gather the true and the beautiful to the glowing
forge of thought.

And there in the vital furnace heat, full patiently
and long,
I changed my wealth, in a human way, to deed and
simple song.

Till there came a voice from the world without—
O very sweet with praise—
And the waft that bore it seemed the breath of
freshly woven bays.

And my soul was glad for a moment, in that little
breeze of fame,
Though it seemed to darken the purity of the living
central flame.

But the heavens, that loved my loyalty, encom-
passed me around,
Till my spirit ear was opened, and I heard the
wondrous sound

Of far majestic voices, beyond the sunset bars,
And sweet and mighty utterances between the solemn stars.

Till, awed to a nobler faithfulness, and humbled very low,
I wrought again at the forge of thought since God would have it so.

Yet, howe'er weak or imperfect the deed, and the rythmic song,
I crowned for aye the eternal Right, and branded the ancient Wrong.

When lo, a voice from the world again! and O it was dread with blame!
The waft that bore it like a breath from poisonous ivy came.

And my soul sank down a moment, bewildered with a doubt;
And the phantom of misgiving was brooding round about.

But the heavens, that loved my loyalty, unsealed my ear again,
And I heard the sound of voices, soft and low as summer rain.

A voice through all the emerald spires where meadow grasses grow:

A colloquy between the leaves where summer roses blow.

A voice from the fairy chamber behind the sea shell's lip,
And a whisper among the mosses where woodland rivulets slip.

A voice from the swaying lilies among the river reeds,
An oracle faintly sighing up from the root to the golden seeds.

A voice that the swinging butterfly folds under its downy wings,
And a low, miraculous murmur, from the soul of creeping things.

And the prophecy of the joint refrain, the theme of the tiny whole,
Was a hint of the infinite value of an earnest human soul.

Thus, saved by the mystic murmurings, from over-pride, or shame,
I work again, in my simple way, secure from praise or blame.

And between the voices far and high, and whisperings near and low,
I live for the true and the beautiful, for God would have it so.

NOT FOR OURSELVES.

WE live not for ourselves. Th' unworthy thought
That darkens in the brain, doth not restrain
And regulate its passion at our will,
But given place, the dread prerogative
Of Being holds—a universal life.
As one polluted billow, surging back,
Sweeping foul offal from offensive shores,
Must vitiate the whole retreating main.
So doth a wicked impulse dim the tide
Of human weal, and darken its advance;
So doth a selfish will pervert the race.

O woman, sitting at the primal springs
Of human destiny! Fair genius of
Creative and unutterable powers!
Appoint the moods and methods of thy heart
In loving wisdom, that the coming child
May bring to the domain of human life,
The sweetness and the majesty which holds
The universe in tone. So shall arise
A race with royal purposes, and wills

Of kingly strength, to keep the world in tune.
So shall the new earth come—the new heaven dawn,
Unheralded, as creeps the life of Spring
Into the pulses of a wintry world.

THE HIGHER UNITY.

OH we have stood on mystic altitudes
That dreamed not of the sunshine. He hath touched
My spirit in that wondrous height of shade,
And walked with me through grand cathedral glooms
Of thought, transcending the factitious sense
Of time and space. Full softly, in our white,
We stept upon mosaic memories,
And on the ruin of a sweet, wild hope,
We planted, in the consecrated hush,
A flower that fades not in that upper air,
Although as frail and delicately fair
As ocean mosses, in their deep sea beds.

And in that dome's wide eloquence of shade,
Full often have we stood with arms entwined,
With that transparent pallor on our brows,
The strong, self conquering gods do ever wear.
One thought, one pulse, one eye, we gazed upon
The struggle and the tragedy of life.

Oh such incomparable spirit-unity,—
Though but for one brief moment, doth outweigh
The poor thin sunshine of a common life,
Its stinted path, and low prudential aim.

LIFE'S DAY.

MORNING.

"O HAPPY bee, linger with me in the clover!
For Day is only begun;
Just wait till the bluebell unclaspeth her cover,
And learn how the secret is done.
There's time both for labor and play, little rover,
'Tis long to the setting of sun.

"I laugh pretty Rose—for I think it is funny
That such a sweet bud of May,
Will neither reveal, for the love nor the money,
The secret she foldeth away.
But you'll open your heart to me down to its honey,
Before it is noon of the Day.

"You lock up your riddle, and will not confess it
Though buttercups drop you gold;
It may be the gay bobolink will express it:—
He sings what has never been told.
He may tangle his song, but I think I shall guess it
Before the morning is old.

"O dark ribbon river! O low singing river!
I'll run with you to the sea,
For you have a mystery, too, to deliver:
I wonder what it can be!
The dew-dropping ferns on the marge are a-quiver
With longing to tell it to me.

"'Tis needless to chide with your ripple and singing,
I'm old enough to be brave;
I'll run to the shore, where the glad sea is bringing
Some wonder in with the wave:
The billows are leaping, and there is a ringing
Of laughter in every cave.

"You linger too long, pretty stream, by the willow;
You loiter by mead and lea:
There's a shell with a purple lip, down by the billow,
All filled with a murmur for me.
Or ever I lie down to sleep on my pillow,
I'll learn that song of the Sea.

"But the earth is so bright, I'll enjoy it at leisure,
For Day is only begun;—
I wish it were noon,—I would have so much treasure!
There's not much work to be done:
There is plenty of time, both for labor and pleasure:
'Tis long to the setting of sun."

NOON.

O THE sweetness of the morning,
And the fleetness of the morning!
  A wave of light and laughter,
    And the sultry noon is here!
All the rapture and the beauty
Is transmuted into duty,
  And Life's patient angel singeth
    "Persevere! Persevere!"

Hath Nature then bereft me?
Hath she won my love and left me?
  Did she mock me with a splendor
    That has faded from the view?
As the child-heart getteth older
Is the Heaven-Heart only colder?
  Is there loss, with no replacement
    That is more divinely true?

Nay, nay! I keep the morning,
All the freshness and adorning,
  The beauty and the radiance,
    The crimson and the gold,
In the precious human treasure
Which the heart alone can measure,
  In the purities and graces
    Which my mother-arms enfold.

I hold the Dawn's completeness,
In mouths of rosy sweetness,
  In locks that snare the sunbeams,
    In eyes of April blue.
Oh Heaven is ever gracious,
And though heart be e'er so spacious,
  God feeds its yearning vastness
    With a glory, grand and true.

While yet the noon-tide lingers,
O oft essaying fingers,
  Amend thy poor achievement
    In this garden of the Lord!
Hand, quicken in thy doing!
Feet, haste in thy pursuing!
  Life's chivalry is labor,
    And action is reward.

'Tis the scripture that the blossom
Hath unfolded from her bosom,
  The wild bee ever hummeth it
    The clover blooms among;
It is what the roses brought me,
And the vanished morning taught me,
  This sweetly tangled meaning,
    Bird-wrought into a song.

The rose still faintly bloweth,
And her honey balm bestoweth,

And wide the ribbon river
Floweth downward to the mere;
And Life is Nature's beauty
Sublimed to earnest duty,
And clear the angel singeth
"Persevere! Persevere!"

EVENING.

I FAIN would rest, while through the sunset arches,
The evening shade
Falls softly on the many weary marches
That I have made.

Yet, as the tide wave unto orbal forces
Rolls ever on,
So by the Love that shapes our human courses
My steps are drawn.

Oh I was in an ecstasy of wonder,
When morning came,
With all the heaven of purple earth lay under,
And golden flame.

And yet I murmured not that primal beauty
Should vanish soon,
But welcomed the sublimer birth of duty
That came with noon.

And now—soul-trustful in the meanings taught me
Of shade and light,
I thank Thee, Father, that Thy love hath brought me
To see the night.

Into the folded wonder of a blossom
I looked at dawn,
And on the star-bright velvet of its bosom
God's name was drawn.

And on the rose leaf's veined interlacing,
On wing of bird,
On crystal sea and sky, I spelled the tracing,
The ONE GREAT WORD.

And later—when the gloriole of beauty
Had fled the noon,
And Love had set the trumpet notes of duty
To perfect tune,

When Life was one with faith, and earnest labor
Was one with prayer,
And the tried soul had learned to bravely neighbor
With vexing care,

I joyed to find the NAME had yet a nearer
And dearer part
In life, than Nature;—graven full and learer
Upon the heart.

And when the way grew terrible with torrent,
And tempest gleam,
Then brighter shone that universal warrant
Of Love Supreme.

And Night's dread glory—calmly comprehended—
Is still the same;—
The awful order of the heavens suspended,
Reveals the NAME.

O Grand Impress! proclaiming earth and Nature
A sacred shrine,
And yielding science the majestic stature
Of Truth Divine!

Life is not then defeat, but triumph rather;
Not poor or small,
But infinitely rich, since thou, my Father,
Art "All in All."

Then pass in peace my soul. Though earth recedeth,
Heaven orbs the way,
And the starred shadow of the night precedeth
Life's larger day.

THE DIFFERENCE.

ONE dwells upon the emerald side
  Of mountain reaches, dim and grand;
Her mansion windows, tall and wide,
  O'erlook the spacious land.

The other, in the valley glen,
  From busy sight and sound aloof,
Lives all secure from worldly ken,
  So low her cottage roof.

One moves through all the gazing throng,
  With changeless, self-reliant grace,
No heart revealings rise to wrong
  Her calm and perfect face.

The other—who is Nature taught
  Disdaineth to be worldly-wise,
And lifts the wondrous change of thought
  Into her azure eyes.

One glides in regal loveliness,
With woven roses for her feet,
The other walks in rustic dress,
Through meadow grasses sweet.

One lends her ear, full graciously,
To adulations fervent strain,
To Love's pathetic minstrelsy,
And passionate refrain.

The other lists, at close of day,
The wood-dove planing on the tree,
The while her little sisters play
And gossip at her knee.

One lays in mine a hand so fair,
So soft and delicately white,
I seem to touch embodied air,
Or clasp a jewelled light.

The other lifts a hand to me
Deep tinted by the golden sun,
And on the little palm I see
The trace of duties done.

And both unto my heart are more
Than I can ever think or tell,
The name of one is Isadore,
The other, Christabel.

And when my glowing pulses beat
The passion throb of earth and time,
I climb, with eager tireless feet,
The mountain reach sublime.

But when I think of life, and death,
And Love's infinitude, 'tis then
I turn and walk with calmest breath
Adown the valley glen.

And if one soul shall rise with me
Eternally,—I know full well
The angels, by the waveless sea,
Will call her Christabel.

THE NEW TIME.

THE old-time gods are grim and stark;
The world-old powers are impotent,
To utter mandates; for another voice
Sweeps up the echoes of all former time
Into diviner fullness, and the earth
Bursts the full calyx of her budding prime
With long restrained opulence. The sea
In happy tides sings pulsing to the shore:
The gray and sullen mountains have set free
The thunder of their laughter; skies out-pour
Their soft miraculous sunshine; tranced vales
Spread fresher greenness; and consoling winds,
Fraught with magnetic breathings, whisper tales
Of a new kingdom, of a power enthroned,
With laws henceforth to Nature's order toned,
Like moon-led waters,—disciplined yet free,
Crowned wisdom of a whole Humanity.

DYING.

TOUCH her forehead—Death!
Softly, with thy snowy finger
Smooth it down;
'Twas the world's cold hand of iron
Carved her frown:
Wrong pursued her, and she never
Quite forgave;
Give her brow a baby smoothness
For the grave.

Kiss her kindly,—Death!
She hath never known a mother's
Sacred care,
But the selfishness of others
Everywhere.
So her lips grew thin:—Love's hunger
Could not cease:—
Round them, in this final slumber,
Into peace.

Clasp her gently—Death!
Lay her shattered form and spirit
On thy arm.
Sublimate her, great Reliever,

With thy calm.
Whisper to the wakening angel
On thy breast,
"For the wretched and the weary
There is rest."

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Sept. 2009

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 012 073 699 1